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HANDS OFF IRELAND!

Revolutionary Communist Group

No.3 20p

**Torture, the RUC and the
British State
James Martin**

**Irish Prisoners in English Jails
Jackie Kaye**

**Building an Anti-Imperialist
Movement
Diane Fox**

**Murder Most Foul
M Holden**

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Number 3 November 1977

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editorial

'Maired Corrigan and Betty Williams acted from a deep conviction that the individual person can make a meaningful contribution for peace through constructive conciliation work.'

This quotation is from the citation which accompanied the awarding of the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize to Maired Corrigan and Betty Williams. Although the Peace People are now quite marginal to the struggle in Ireland, they are still highly valued by world imperialism. Their 'constructive conciliation work' has included support for the forces of British imperialism:

'We fully support the rule of law... The RUC and other security forces are the only legitimate upholders of the rule of law.' (*Morning Star* 14 October 1976)

The constructive work of the Peace People has included openly calling for informing against Republicans and Republican sympathisers. The 'rule of law' turns out to be the law that British imperialism rules. As we pointed out in *Hands off Ireland!* 1:

'To call for peace without taking sides on what kind of peace is necessary can only help the oppressor — the British ruling class — to win peace at the expense of the Irish people.' (*Hands off Ireland* 1 p3)

The Peace People clearly call for such a peace, demanding that the oppressed submit to British oppression. The ruling classes of Europe and the US broadcast their soothing lullabies in order to drown the cries of the oppressed people for help. World imperialism recognises the importance — to itself — of the Peace People, and awards them an £80,000 prize to continue 'their constructive work'.

It is an interesting fact that as the repression in Ireland reaches new levels of barbarity, the bourgeoisie speaks of peace. And not only the British bourgeoisie. President Carter wants peace, Jack Lynch wants peace, the Pope wants peace. The more the bourgeoisie savages the Irish people, the more it asks the oppressed to be peaceful. Those who are really concerned for peace will ask themselves: what causes the war?

British workers must look to the causes of the war and not allow themselves to be lulled to sleep by the song of peace. The cause of the war in Ireland is the oppression of the Irish people by British imperialism. In order to oppress the Irish people the British state *must* torture them, *must* terrorise them, *must* wreck their homes, *must* jail and *must* kill them. Wars do not end in peace alone, they end in victory — somebody wins and somebody loses. Either

British imperialism or the Irish working class will win peace by winning this war. So the question is not simply: do we want peace? But what kind of peace—the 'peace' brought by the British army, crushing and dividing the Irish working class? Or the other kind of peace—the ending of British domination, allowing the Irish working class to unite. Our answer is clear. The interests of the working class demand the freedom of the Irish people from British oppression. And not only in the interests of the Irish working class but also in the interests of the British working class.

Today, in Britain, the working class, in its struggle to defend itself against the attacks on its living standards, finds itself crippled ideologically. It is crippled by the belief that there is a way out of the present crisis which requires neither the overthrow of capitalism nor the defeat of the working class. Consequently, the dominant political opposition to the Labour government's attacks takes the form of a left alternative programme calling for a series of *national* measures—investment, wage rises, import controls, full employment—to be carried out by the British *nation* state under a left government. This general political outlook is extended to the question of Ireland. There too, it is argued that the crisis can be resolved without either the defeat of British imperialism or the oppression of the Irish people. There it is proposed that the British *nation* state under a left government should carry through a series of measures to unite the Irish working class, end the violence and lead the way to a future re-unification of Ireland. This political approach ties the British working class to the British ruling class. Because there is no common interest between the working class and the ruling class, the attempt to build a programme on such a common interest means that, in reality, the will of the bourgeoisie prevails.

Those who support this standpoint argue that it is not the presence of British imperialism which divides the working class, but the extremely high rate of unemployment. Solve this unemployment problem—it is said—and the unity of the Irish working class will be secured. Then, and only then, can the confrontation with British imperialism begin. To do away with the unemployment, the argument goes, there should be massive investment in the North. But this ignores two critical factors—firstly, that under capitalism investment takes place only to make a profit, and secondly that capitalism is in crisis. This means that investment only takes place to produce more profits using fewer workers, and that overall, increased investment in this period can only increase unemployment. There are two recent examples of this tendency in the North. Gallahers recently announced investment plans for their Belfast factory. They plan to invest £8M and cut the workforce by 500. Du Pont plan to invest £29M in rubber production in Derry. This invest-

ment will lead to a loss of between 800 and 1000 jobs. As unemployment increases the competition for jobs will increase, and with it, the divisions, in the Irish working class will deepen.

The call for investment in the North in this period, far from bringing unity, is a call to imperialism to deepen the divisions in the Irish working class. It then becomes a call to the British working class to support British imperialism.

This bulletin shows what the interests of imperialism mean: 'a carnival of reaction'. Cde Martin shows how the use of torture by the RUC is a necessary feature of British imperialism's drive to eliminate all opposition to its rule in Ireland. It is not enough to know that torture is taking place. To stop there allows the belief that this torture is an excess which could be removed by the British state if it had the will to do so. It is necessary to go further, as Cde Martin does, to understand that this torture is an essential part of British rule in Ireland. Only then can it be seen that to halt the torture you have to end British rule. In Britain this means that in order to oppose the torture in Ireland you have to oppose British rule over Ireland. This means demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops.

The article 'Carter's Speech: A Threat or a Promise?' shows how US imperialism has joined in the 'carnival of reaction'. Carter's speech has been almost universally written off as banal, insignificant or as supporting all sides at once. Cde Greene shows that it is the British state that Carter wishes above all to support, and the struggle for national liberation that he wishes to defeat. US imperialism has no desire whatever to see a successful struggle against British domination. With the American election behind him, Carter no longer even has opportunistically to exploit the Irish-American vote. Carter's speech shows the fear that eats the soul of the ruling classes. The fear of a free and united Irish working class ending not only British domination but also capitalism itself.

In *Hands off Ireland 2* we said that the contributions that we printed from cdes outside the RCG were an important step forward which we hoped to continue. In this issue we print two such contributions. Cde Kaye describes the treatment of Irish political prisoners in Britain. These prisoners are treated according to the need of British imperialism to wipe out any opposition in Britain to its rule in Ireland. The recent death of Sean O'Connell shows the extent to which British imperialism must terrorise the Irish to prevent such opposition. Cde Holden's article shows another part of the same process: the continual state harassment of Republicans. This harassment has been particularly directed at Luton Sinn Fein. This is undoubtedly because cdes in Luton Sinn Fein have established themselves in the local labour

movement as defenders of not only the Irish, but also the British working class. Above all else, the British state seeks to prevent British workers from combining with Irish Republicans. This combination threatens the existence of British imperialism because it strengthens both the Irish movement and the British movement. A united movement of Irish Republicans and British workers fighting for the unity and independence of Ireland is the most horrifying spectre that haunts the British state today.

But the article 'Building an anti-imperialist movement' shows that the bulk of the British left will unfortunately, play no role in the building of such a movement. Cde Fox reveals the hollowness of the claims of the groups which make up the UTOM. They formally declare for the immediate withdrawal of British troops but practically engage only in liberal criticism of British rule in Ireland. Such criticism will aid neither the British nor the Irish working class. Liberal criticism provokes liberal solutions. If British rule is criticised merely on the grounds of its brutality, then it seems enough to argue that it should become more gentle, more democratic, more peaceable. It is only by revolutionary criticism which shows that British rule as such is *necessarily* brutal, *necessarily* a rule of terror, that we can win British workers to the cause of the Irish people which is, in fact, their own cause.

Those who read this bulletin and support its work have a duty to engage in this struggle. We need the active support of our readers, to subscribe to and sell the bulletin and to write for it. We also need money to finance it and the work that goes on with it. British workers who want to see an end to the reign of British terror in Ireland must engage in the fight for the immediate withdrawal of British troops and the right of the Irish people to self-determination. Such a fight requires a political battle in which this bulletin is a central weapon. And those who read this bulletin and support its aims have a duty to play an active part in this work.

**John Fitzgerald
14 October 1977**

THE TREATMENT OF IRISH PRISONERS POLITICAL IN ENGLAND

In 1966 Lord Mountbatten carried out an inquiry into prison security in England following two spectacular prison escapes; those of the Great Train Robbers from Wandsworth and George Blake from Wormwood Scrubs. As a result of this report the system of security which now operates in English prisons was introduced and it is this system which has enabled the Home Office over the last seven years to treat Irish political prisoners differently from other prisoners while claiming that there is no such thing as political status in England.

All prisoners in jail in this country are now categorised according to the 'security risk' they represent, ie according to Mountbatten how highly motivated they are to escape, from 'A' to 'D'. 'A' is the highest security category. All Irish political prisoners in England, at the moment about 90, with the exception of a handful nearing the end of their sentences, are classified as 'A' prisoners. This classification bears no relation to the length of the sentence or the nature of the offence. Myra Hindley, for example, is not an 'A' prisoner but Ann and Eileen Gillespie serving 14 years on a charge of 'conspiring to cause explosions' in the same jail as Hindley are both category 'A'. Michael MacLochlainn sentenced to five years at the age of 17 on a conspiracy charge has been an 'A' prisoner for the whole of his sentence. Out of the total prison population in England of around 40,000 prisoners there are approximately 300 'A' prisoners. Out of the total of 90 Irish political prisoners, 86 are classified as 'A'. This is the meaning of political status.

A prisoner who is classified as 'A' can only be visited by persons acceptable to the police and who have submitted photos along with a written explanation of their relationship to the prisoner to the police and been visited and questioned about this relationship in their homes or at work. In practice this means that these prisoners can only be visited by members of their immediate family. All mail is censored in both directions and political books as well as Irish nationalist papers are not allowed in to Irish Category A prisoners on the grounds that they represent a threat to 'good order' in prison. Recently the Home Office said that there are 92 prisoners in England who have their visits under 'specially secure' conditions; 82 of them are, according to the same source, Irish

political prisoners, or in Home Office jargon 'prisoners whose conviction arises out of the current situation in Northern Ireland.' Secure conditions on a visit mean that the prisoner has to speak to his visitor through a glass or mesh screen or from behind a hardboard partition. Two warders sit either side of the table to prevent any physical contact between the prisoner and his family and to prevent the prisoner discussing the conditions of his imprisonment. The warders frequently make notes of the conversation and according to information given to the PAC by families, warders sometimes join in the conversation, ask visitors to 'speak up' and in one case they asked a visitor to speak with an English accent.

As a result of these visiting conditions Irish prisoners refused all family visits in July this year and hunger strikes have been held in Gartree, Parkhurst and Long Lartin.

Over half of the Irish political prisoners in England have their immediate families in Ireland and visits are therefore expensive and difficult. Some, like the old and infirm parents of Fr Fell and Eddie Byrne are simply unable physically to travel from Donegal in the far west of Ireland to the Isle of Wight. Fr Fell's mother recently died, having been able to visit him only once in the previous two years as she suffered from heart trouble and Parkinson's disease. Families who do visit are harassed by the authorities. In June the families of two prisoners in Wakefield, Stephen Nordonne and Stephen Blake, were arrested by Yorkshire police under the Prevention of Terrorism Act on arrival in England despite the fact that they had notified the prison well in advance and been 'vetted' by the police. Stephen Blake's brother was arrested twice during a three day visit.

It is supposedly Home Office policy to put prisoners into prisons near to their families. Figures released by the Home Office show that since 1969 328 prisoners have been transferred from England and Wales to Scotland; since 1972 66 prisoners have been transferred from Northern Ireland to prisons in England and Scotland. There are, as we are often reminded, four top security prisons in Northern Ireland, yet only four Irish political prisoners have been transferred from England after a hunger strike which lasted 205 days during which

time they were viciously force fed. The UDA claims that six of their Scottish prisoners have petitioned to be transferred. One prisoner, Shane Paul O'Doherty from Derry, is entering his 12 month in solitary, wearing only a blanket, in Wormwood Scrubs, while demanding a transfer to a prison in the country from which he was kidnapped to stand trial in London for 'offences' committed in Northern Ireland. On the other hand, between 1970 and 1975 32 British soldiers were convicted of criminal offences in Northern Ireland, and all except five have been transferred to serve their sentences in England. One of them, Costas Georgiou, was subsequently released on parole to recruit mercenaries to fight against the MPLA in Angola. 'Normal' prison practice does not apply to Irish political prisoners where it would work to their advantage.

Where a prison Rule can be used punitively it is used systematically against these prisoners. Rule 43 allows a prison to put a prisoner in solitary, even though he has committed no offence. The period of solitary when approved by the prison Board of Visitors is 28 days, and this period is renewable indefinitely where this is felt necessary for 'the maintenance of Good Order and Discipline', hence it is known as the GOD rule. The Home Office said in 1976 that 46 Irish political prisoners had been held in solitary under this rule in the previous twelve months. One prisoner, Liam MacLarnon, has in fact spent two years in solitary under this rule. Another, Brendan Dowd, has been in solitary except for two one month intervals, since May 1975. The only appeal against the imposition of this rule is a petition to the Home Office which takes on average between two and six months to reply. It was to protest at the holding in solitary of Brendan Dowd that six other Irish prisoners barricaded themselves in a cell in Albany in September 1976. In the resulting brutal attack by warders in full riot gear Sean Campbell had an arm, a leg and ribs broken; Fr Fell had his nose fractured and four others lost hair and received extensive bruising and gashes into which the prison doctor, after a delay of some hours, eventually put stitches without using anaesthetic. All six were subsequently prevented from taking legal advice for six months and several of them were prevented from seeing their families for some weeks.

Physical brutality is, of course, dramatic and the Albany incident is not an isolated one. In November 1974 14 Irish prisoners were assaulted in Winslow Green prison in two separate incidents. 14 warders were tried nearly two years later and acquitted. In the PROP inquiry into the Hull riot of August 1976 evidence from English prisoners was to the effect that Irish and black prisoners received the worst beatings when they came down off the roof. Irish prisoners were made to kneel on the floor and warders urinated on them in an attempt to make them sing 'God Save the Queen.' However, although physical assaults may be dramatic psychological brutality can undermine prisoners in a more ruthless and efficient manner as British experiments with sensory deprivation have shown. Irish political prisoners in England are victims of an insistent bureaucratic victimisation of the kind outlined. Rooftop demonstrations in the Scrubs in November 1975 and Wakefield in January 1976 were attempts by Irish prisoners to draw attention to the grievance they felt about closed visits, refusal of educational and vocational training and segregation from other prisoners. Such attempts have inevitably been ignored or distorted by the imperialist press into vague suggestions that 'IRA' prisoners were causing trouble. Even during the long hunger strike of 1973-74 a large part of the gutter press gave the impression that the prisoners were asking to be released. In that case the Home Office under Roy Jenkins eventually came to terms and agreed to transfer four of the prisoners, but only after Michael

Gaughan had died while being force fed in Parkhurst in June 1974.

In December 1975 Frank Stagg went on hunger strike in Wakefield in protest at the fact that he had spent nearly three years in solitary in a cell with no heating, no reading matter, no radio. He asked to be transferred to a prison in Ireland near to his home in Mayo. The British government were so worried about the political impact of this that they ran three full page ads against Frank and his family in the predominantly nationalist paper, the Belfast *Irish News*. In England however it was sufficient to leave the bourgeois press to censor the facts themselves. Frank died in February 1976. The British press treated his lonely stand against ill-treatment as some kind of publicity stunt by the IRA. One can only speculate on the treatment they would have given to a hunger strike by a Soviet 'dissident'.

In October 1976 Noel Jenkinson died, apparently of a heart attack, in the security unit of Leicester prison. Mountbatten had said that conditions in the security unit of Durham were such as 'no country with a record for civilized behaviour ought to tolerate any longer than is absolutely necessary.' The unit in Leicester is generally recognised as being even worse than the one in Durham, yet Noel had been in units there and in Parkhurst ever since January 1973 during which time he had been assaulted three times and had spent six months in solitary under Rule 43. He died six months before his case went before the European Court and two months after he had made it

known that he intended to sue the Home Office about his prison treatment. The coroner at the inquest refused his wife's request for an independent autopsy.

There is no doubt that political status does exist in British prisons. There is a special section in the Prisons department of the Home Office with three senior civil servants who deal only with Irish political prisoners and prison officials refer openly to 'special' Category A prisoners, meaning the Irish, who are subjected to more restrictions than other prisoners. Political status in England does not mean extra visits, food parcels, own clothes or the expectation of amnesty. We should all make ourselves aware of the special 'victim status' given to political prisoners in this country, for while at the moment most of these are Irish they will surely be followed by anti-fascists, trade unionists, revolutionaries and political activists of all kinds who oppose the economic, military and political status quo. We have no excuse for not knowing what it means. Three brave Irishmen have given their lives to show us what being a political prisoner means in England today.

A Greene

MURDER MOST FOUL

confession admitting he had acted as an agent provocateur, laying traps for fellow Irishmen who had subsequently received long prison sentences. He had been paid about £20 a month. NCCL Chairman Larry Grant had encouraged Lennon to go into hiding in London and return next day to complete his statement. Lennon refused saying he was worried about the IRA and the Special Branch. He told Larry Grant as he left the NCCL offices in Kings Cross Road ... 'I should not be surprised if the Special Branch did me in and tried to make it look like an IRA job.' His comment was soon to be backed up ... for next day he was found dead in Banstead!

Lennon's body was found on Easter Saturday morning and on Easter Sunday all the national newspapers in England, Ireland and on the continent carried the story, and his photograph adorned the front pages. I was in Belfast at the time and I remember reading the reports of his death. On television that night the police were interviewed and stated that they had carried out raids on the homes of known Republicans in Luton, Bletchley and Hemel Hempstead and were questioning members of Sinn Fein in London and the Home Counties. I returned from Belfast on Easter Monday expecting to find chaos and reports of

On the 9th of August 1973, three members of Luton Sinn Fein were arrested by the Special Branch in a car park near Bletchley. The three men were Sean Campbell, Gerry Mealy, and Phil Sheridan. The three were taken to Luton police station where they were later charged with 'Conspiracy to Rob'. At their trial in December of that year they were found guilty and sentenced to ten years in gaol. That appeared to be the end of the affair ... until the following easter when a young Irish man by the name of Kenneth Lennon was found shot dead in Banstead in Surrey.

Lennon, according to the police at the time, was 'executed' by an IRA revenge squad. His death did indeed have all the hall-marks of what the gutter press would describe as an 'IRA-type execution'. He had been shot twice in the back of the head, and the autopsy showed he had been sever-

ely beaten before being shot. The following day the National Council for Civil Liberties issued a press statement claiming that Lennon had been to see them shortly before his death and had admitted he was an informer for the Special Branch. He had told them he had been 'blackmailed' into working for them. The police had told they knew of the activities of his sister Bernadette, that she was known to be a republican supporter in Newry. (She was in fact an ambulance driver in Newry). They had told him also that they had a record on him and showed him photographs taken of himself back in 1969 tearing down the barricades during the rioting in that town during the Civil Rights disturbances. They had told him that unless he was willing to work for them they would arrest him and his sister and charge them. Lennon spent some time at the NCCL offices and dictated a full

STATEMENT

The following statement was given to *Hands Off Ireland!* by Michael Holden. The statement concerns yet another attempt by the police to harass and intimidate Irish Republicans in Britain. We are publishing this statement because it is important to realise that the Lennon case was not an isolated event: it was part of a consistent effort to incriminate and isolate Irish Republicans in Britain. Cde Holden's statement reveals some of the techniques used — rumour and guilt by association. The rumour in question came from the British state and concerned Vauxhall's factory in Luton. It is no coincidence that there are '16 or 17' Sinn Fein members in that factory. It is a clear attempt to isolate the Sinn Fein cdes from their fellow workers. The Special Branch is even now harassing Sinn Fein marches in Kilburn in an attempt to provoke breaches of the peace. British imperialism has to continue its efforts to prevent any alliance between Irish Republican workers and their fellow British workers.

I arrived home from work on March 18th about 11.00pm and my parents told me that a man named Finbar had been trying to contact me. About 11.15pm he arrived at the door but by that time I had decided that I did not really want to see anyone at that time of night, especially since I wanted to watch a film on TV. However I heard him talking to my father and he sounded very worried and agitated when my father told him I had gone somewhere else and could not see him that night.

When he had gone I began to think about it and decided to telephone him myself and ask him to come over. I looked up the number of Finbar McDonnell, leader of the Labour group on the local Council, and asked if it was him that had been trying to contact me. He replied that it was him who had called and that he would like to see me. I asked him what he wanted and he replied 'I don't want to talk about it on the phone' and I said to him 'Alright I'll see you tomorrow'. He said 'No it's too important I must see you as quickly as possible'. I said if it was that important he could come over right away. He agreed and said he would be over in ten minutes.

About ten past twelve he arrived. I invited him in but he refused to enter saying he would rather not come in as 'phones are tapped, houses are bugged. Can you come

police raids on the homes of our members in Luton, but I was amazed to discover that not one house had been raided, not one of our members had been arrested or even questioned. Could it be the police knew Lennon's killers? Did they in fact know the Republican movement was not responsible for his death? And if the IRA were not responsible, then who was?

The police admitted that Lennon was a police spy, but they maintained, and still maintain he worked for them willingly and for money. If he was a willing worker why then did he go in fear of them? In his written confession to the NCCL, Lennon named two Special Branch officers as his 'contacts'. These men were Det. Inspector Ronald Wickens of Scotland Yard Special Branch, and Det. Constable Dwyer. Both these policemen have said Lennon had made the first approach. He had gone to them they said on July 27th 1973 volunteering to pass on information regarding the activities of Sinn Fein in Luton. *This is a lie*. We know that Lennon was active as a spy long before that.

In 1972 he is known to have approached John Higgins, a Sinn Fein member in Luton shortly after Higgins had returned from Belfast. Lennon said he was a member of an 'ASU' (Active Service Unit of the IRA) in Luton, and invited Higgins to join. He said he could use Higgins because he was an electrical engineer, and he told him the ASU had weapons hidden in and around Bedfordshire. He had asked John Higgins if he would look at a metal detector the ASU had. He wanted the detector to be made 'more sensitive' so as to locate the 'hidden weapons' more easily. Higgins told him he had no interest in the IRA and asked him to leave. Lennon eventually did so but said he would be back. He remained true to his word and in fact he did return to see Higgins several weeks later. He was promptly kicked out of the house by Higgins. In his confession to the NCCL Lennon admits all this. The police have been proved liars. Their claim that Lennon had worked for them for only a short time has been shown to be untrue. Lennon readily admitted to the NCCL that the Special Branch wanted 'more activity' in Luton from Sinn Fein. They had made it clear to him that he was to involve the Sinn Fein members in the fake 'ASU' — to 'egg them on' — as Det. Inspector Wickens had put it. The police in fact were promoting crime, not preventing it.

After Lennon's death it became necessary to do a 'whitewash job' on the activities of the Special Branch in Irish affairs. An investigation into his death was demanded by Luton MP Brian Sedgemore and Hemel Hempstead MP Robin Corbett. The investigation into Lennon's death was headed by Deputy Commissioner James Starritt of Scotland Yard. Starritt in fact was given this job because he could be relied upon to bring in the verdict the police and the press

wanted. Starritt was an Ulsterman with very strong links with the RUC in the North of Ireland. His brother is a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in Northern Ireland and a member of the Orange Order — a Protestant/Loyalist sectarian organisation. True to expectations Starritt's report was eventually published and in his book *Reluctant Judas* London Barrister Geoff Robertson has this to say:

'A report to the Home Secretary by Deputy Commissioner James Starritt contains a mixture of truth, inconsistency and mystery'.

As far as we in Sinn Fein are concerned this 'investigation' by Starritt was a non-event. Only some of the people in Luton who knew Lennon were questioned by police investigating Lennon's death. If this investigation had been held by some independent organisation we are certain the verdict would have been different. The 'Luton 3' are still imprisoned, and in 1976 John Higgins was arrested in London and was later charged with 'Attempting to buy radio equipment for use by an illegal organisation'. Mercenary recruiter John Banks was called to give evidence for the prosecution, and although it was shown that Banks was a liar beyond any shadow of doubt his word was taken by the jury who brought in a 'Guilty' verdict. John Higgins was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. John Banks has never been charged and remains today a free man.

The Lennon case is a clear example of the use of agents provocateurs by the British state to incriminate Republicans. Lennon was killed because he threatened to expose his own role as a provocateur. The Special Branch then attempted to use his death as a further means of harassing Irish Republicans in Britain. These methods of provocation and harassment will be increasingly used by the British state not only to defeat opposition to its rule in Ireland but also to defeat opposition to its rule in Britain. The Lennon affair shows that the Special Branch are prepared to go to any lengths to convict, harass, and even 'eliminate' their victims. It is now nearly four years since Lennon was 'eliminated'. His murder was never solved and demands for an independent enquiry have fallen on deaf ears. We are certain that his murderers will never be brought to justice.

M Holden

outside?' I wasn't too happy about that but I agreed. We walked from the door to the pathway (about ten feet) he then said to me he had been given information by somebody high up — I interrupted him to ask 'high up where? In the Republican movement?' He said 'no' and I said 'In the establishment over here?' 'Yes' he said. I asked what the information was and he told me he had been told on good authority that there was an Active Service Unit set up or being set up in Luton and that they were planning to plant a bomb on the assembly line at Vauxhall's motor factor in Luton. I was very surprised at that and said 'I don't think that the IRA would bomb the Luton factory. They have never bombed factories. And, anyway we have 16 or 17 members of Sinn Fein working at Vauxhalls'. I asked who would benefit if such a thing happened — only our enemies would benefit. I said if a bombing was carried out there it would completely destroy all Sinn Fein activity not only in Luton but in the whole area. He said he thought that despite my feelings there were people mad enough to do such a thing — once again I said I did not think so.

He said 'I believe my information to be genuine I am taking it seriously and I think you should as well.' I still did not believe him but I said 'Now that you've told me this I will take it seriously'. I reminded him of how Special Branch had tried to disrupt Sinn Fein activity in Luton and drew his attention to the 'Lennon affair'. It didn't seem to register with him so I told him I believed the Special Branch had on two occasions during the past three years used provocateurs in an attempt to involve our members in illegal activities. I said the Luton three had been set up by Lennon who later admitted to the National Council for Civil Liberties that he had been working for the police. Finbar McDonnell then said to me 'If an ASU was planning to bomb Vauxhalls, you would know about it wouldn't you?' 'No I would not' I replied. He said 'You are a Republican in Luton?' 'Yes I am political — Sinn Fein' I said 'I do not have and never have had any contact with the IRA. You are assuming that because I am a member of Sinn Fein that I know members of the IRA. We in Sinn Fein believe that our phones are bugged and that we are probably being watched 24 hours a day so therefore if the IRA existed in Luton they would certainly not make contact with us.' I went on to tell him that although we were strictly a political organisation and were not involved with IRA activity, the Special Branch had often tried to involve our members in 'illegal' activity such as the present case of John Higgins who is on trial. I told Finbar it was the firm belief of our members that John Higgins was 'set up' by the police.

At that stage in the conversation I became suspicious of him and decided to play along with him. I told him I would go to Luton and find out what I could. I said I would

ask questions here and there to see if there was a rumour going around which could in any way throw more light on the subject.

I said I would see him again mentioning that since he was outside my door at such a late hour he would be noticed if I was being watched. At that point we parted company. The next morning I thought seriously over last night's events and decided that my next move would be to get someone to witness what had been said. I wanted a completely independent witness who in no way could be connected with political and/or Sinn Fein activities. I decided eventually to contact Jim Brannon because I knew him when he was a reporter for the Evening Post. He had interviewed me on several occasions following the scandal of the 'Lennon affair' and he knew the details of that case.

I phoned Jim Brannon and told him I had something important that he might be able to use. I would not talk on the phone but asked him to come and see me. He agreed to do so. The following day he came to the house and I told him I wanted to talk to him away from the house and invited him to the Breakspear hotel. We went to the Breakspear and I told him about Finbar McDonnell coming to see me. I asked if he could be prepared to act as a witness if I could get McDonnell to repeat all that he had said to me on the first occasion and he agreed to do that. I told him I would phone McDonnell that night and would try to arrange a meeting at the Breakspear hotel for the following night. I then rang Finbar McDonnell and asked if he would be prepared to meet me on Thursday 24th March at the hotel.

At about 9.20pm Finbar McDonnell arrived and we sat at a table in a corner, away from anyone else. I introduced Jim Brannon as 'a friend from Luton' and then got Finbar to repeat everything that he had said to me outside my door the night of the 18th. When he had done this I suggested to Finbar that he was getting himself into something that perhaps he did not understand and that it was very serious, I suggested that perhaps he was under pressure and pressed him to reveal his source of information. He refused to do that and stated that under no circumstances would he reveal the identity of his informant. I asked who had sent him to me, was it an MP, someone in the cabinet, the police and again he repeated that he was not prepared to say. I asked if it were possible someone was using his Irish background as a weapon against him — He said no that was not the case.

I then told Finbar that after all this I was in a very difficult situation and that in order to protect myself I would have to make a full statement to the National Council for Civil Liberties. He replied that if I did make the information public he would deny that he had ever met me. I told him that this would make my position even worse and asked why *he* had not been to the police

with the information. He told me he had not been to the police and had come to me in order to prevent a disaster. And that he believed that prevention was better than cure. He was obviously worried though that I threatened to expose all this to the NCCL and the press. I told him that I, as a known Republican, was unable to go to the police, since if the police told the press I was their informant this would look very bad for me, in terms of my own movement.

I then asked him why he thought it was that if his information was true, the police, who must surely know of it (since he had said it had come from 'high up'), were not taking any action themselves. Our members were still walking in and out at Vauxhalls and were not being searched. He thought this over and agreed I had a point there. He said he would go back to his informant and discuss this and all I had suggested to him about the possibility of a police 'set up' for Sinn Fein members. The meeting then broke up after Jim Brannon left.

The following Monday (28th March) I discussed this with two friends and decided that on my behalf they would go to the NCCL the next day and bring a solicitor in order for me to make a statement. At the same time, I decided to contact my MP, Robin Corbett, especially since Finbar McDonnell is the leader of the Labour group on the local Council. I contacted Corbett by phone late Monday night and arranged to meet him sometime the next day.

My friends went to the NCCL on Tuesday the 29th and I waited at home for Robin Corbett to telephone to arrange a meeting for that night. My friends returned with a solicitor Ms Gill Evans who by then had been told the events of the last few days. I then prepared a statement with her. I had arranged to meet Robin Corbett at his home at 8.30pm and was accompanied there by my solicitor and Jim Brannon who was prepared to repeat all that he had heard on the night of 24th March.

I repeated my story to Robin Corbett but before I could finish he interrupted and told us that he already knew what we were about to say since he had been contacted earlier by Bart Milner — Northern Ireland Officer of the NCCL, whom my friends had seen earlier that day.

My solicitor suggested to Mr Corbett that he should invite Finbar to the meeting but he refused. Jim Brannon suggested to Mr Corbett that the police be invited and again he declined to do this. Corbett then said that he would investigate the matter and see McDonnell himself. It was agreed he would have 48 hours to do this. We left his house then with Mr Corbett promising to contact me within 48 hours. I waited until 10.00pm on Thursday 31st March and Mr Corbett did not contact me. I felt that the situation was now so serious I had to contact other people, including the press.

During this time my solicitor did not contact me either and I felt unable to go further without seeking her advice.

Jack Dromey of the NCCL and Bart Milner were both contacted on Thursday night and Friday morning respectively and both said they would find the solicitor and get her to phone me. It is interesting to note that when Mr Milner was challenged as to why he had tipped off Corbett that I was preparing a statement for the NCCL, Mr Milner denied this allegation and said he had been in touch with Corbett but it was after our meeting on Tuesday night. By this morning I decided to contact Mr Corbett myself and asked him if he had seen Finbar McDonnell and whether he had an explanation. He simply told me that Mr McDonnell was in bed ill, and that he had not been able to see him. I became agitated at this and told him I was taking this very seriously. I asked him if he could go and see Finbar even though he was ill. He didn't comment on this and I told him that I was now so worried that arrangements were being made to go to the press. I closed the conversation at that point. I then went to the Evening Post/Echo and told the whole story to Rosemary Smith and Paul Brown (reporters). They said they would go and see Finbar McDonnell and Robin Corbett.

My information to date is that both parties have been contacted by the press and have agreed to a press interview tonight.

This statement is true and all the events described have taken place.

(signed)

M Holden

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TORTURE, THE RUC AND BRITISH STATE

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (R.U.C.) plays a key role in maintaining British domination in the North of Ireland. Its sectarian role in an earlier period is well known to the British labour movement. However it is often thought that it has undergone fundamental reform by the British government, which can in the future contain any excesses by the force.

This view is fundamentally wrong because it mistakes a change in the RUC's personnel for a change in its role. No amount of reform can change the fact that the RUC exists to preserve the sectarian statelet. Reports of brutality sometimes surface in the British press, but these incidents are invariably painted as 'excesses'. This is a distortion. Brutal attacks on the Republican section of the working class are an essential part of the RUC's job. This will become clear when we make a detailed examination of the part the RUC plays in maintaining British domination. The repressive role of the RUC complements that of the British army. It organises a vital part of the mechanism which represses the Republican minority.

This mechanism begins with British army harassment which has been stepped up considerably in recent months. This harassment is carried out indiscriminately to terrorise the Catholic population into abandoning their opposition to British imperialism. A typical example has been the activities of the Royal Marine Commandos in the Turf Lodge. They have broken into and ransacked houses. Residents have been beaten up and threatened with further intimidation unless they supply information concerning Republican sympathisers. A number of people have been taken to Fort Monagh for further brutal treatment. Methods such as the imposition of a curfew, the planting of ammunition and the photographing of victims have been employed to repress the local population. Even the Peace People—hardly enemies of British imperialism—have complained that the activities of the army hinder their campaign to undermine the support of the Republicans:

'But the very credibility of such a campaign is undermined by the militaristic stupidity of heavy response screening.'
(*Irish Times* 13 August 1977)

The army then hands over its victims to the RUC. They are brought to the RUC

barracks for 'questioning'—a polite term for torture of various kinds. The RUC has never been renowned for its tender treatment of Republican prisoners, but RUC torture of suspects has reached new proportions in recent months. Brutal beating of Republican sympathisers in the period of detention, prior to them being charged, is a daily occurrence. In 1976 there were 1,834 complaints against the RUC, a body which has 5,500 members. 875 of these pertained solely to assault—double the number for the previous year! During 1977 torture, and the resulting protests, have continued to mount. This evoked the following remarks from Kenneth Newman—the Chief Constable of the RUC.

'In recent months I have found it necessary to issue instructions to the force warning them that they must take precautions to prevent self inflicted injuries by prisoners. There have been instances of prisoners wounding themselves with eating utensils, a nail, a tin of lemonade, or by butting their head against a wall or smashing a window.'
(*Guardian* 25 June 1977)

The attempt to cover up torture by passing it off as 'self inflicted injuries' is nothing new. The South African government rebuts all charges of prisoner maltreatment and suspicious death in the same way.

We can see how ludicrous these pathetic excuses are from an examination of two recent cases. Peter McGrath, 64, was arrested and taken to Castlereagh police station. Following 'questioning' he had to be removed to the psychiatric wing of Musgrove Park Hospital where he was held under military custody. Further treatment in Armagh Psychiatric Hospital was necessary. Less than four weeks later Gerald Patrick Muldoon, 22, collapsed under 'questioning' and also had to be removed to the psychiatric wing of Musgrove Park Hospital. He was described by a hospital doctor as 'very disturbed' (*Irish Times* 12 July 1977) and was later transferred to St Lukes Psychiatric Hospital in Armagh. These two cases alone give the lie to Newman's absurd explanation.

The parallel with South Africa does not stop with police behaviour itself. Just as the South African press has been given a year 'to clean itself up'—that is, to stop reporting repression—so too does the British state want the press to muzzle itself. Listen

months or twelve months before receiving even a preliminary hearing. In this manner, despite denials to the contrary, internment continues. Internment serves two main functions, firstly, to harass and intimidate the Republican community as a whole and secondly to disrupt and undermine the work of anti-imperialist organisations.

An excellent example of the latter is the case of John McAnulty, General Secretary of Peoples Democracy — an Irish Socialist organisation. Arrested on the 5th July, Cde McAnulty was charged two days later with 'possession of documents likely to be of use to terrorists' at an unspecified date 'between January 1976 and March 1977'. He was remanded in custody, having been refused bail. Over three months later he is still awaiting trial, detained on this nebulous charge.

Sooner or later — later rather than sooner, the accused person goes to trial. He is highly likely to be brought before a Diplock Court. These courts, introduced in 1973, have no jury — guilt or innocence being decided by the judge who is appointed and paid by the British state. In these circumstances the burden is on the suspect to prove his or her innocence. The Diplock Commission recommended that such safeguards as existed under the Judges Rules be 'adjusted' to make it easier to secure a conviction on the basis of statements alone. The significance of this step is indicated by the following:

'The man accused of murder appears in court, in around two-thirds of cases wholly or principally on the strength of his confessions. One-judge courts being what they are, that almost inevitably means conviction.' (Why do so many hard men confess to the RUC? *Irish Times* 3 August 1977)

Once convicted the prisoner is sentenced. In the last twelve months the British state has increased the maximum penalties and introduced 'new' offences.

Earlier this year increased penalties were brought in for membership of proscribed organisations, for unlawful collection of information, and for training in the manufacture and use of firearms or explosives. More recently the Criminal Law (Amendment) NI Order 1977 was introduced. Appropriately it took effect on the ninth of August — the sixth anniversary of the introduction of internment. The Order creates three new offences:

- a) Placing or sending a hoax bomb.
- b) Sending a hoax bomb message;
- c) Threatening to kill someone (other than in writing).

For the hoax offences, maximum penalties will be a £1,000 fine or three months jail or both on summary conviction, and five years on indictment. The maximum penalty for the third offence is ten years. In addition the maximum sentences for some other offences are increased. For example the

penalty for conspiracy on some explosive offences, ie making or keeping explosive substances, is increased from twenty years to life.

These new offences and an offence concerning the concealment of information were made scheduled offences — that is, upon indictment, persons accused may be tried in a Diplock Court. Therefore these two orders give substantial new repressive powers to the British state. We have therefore the following mechanism. The army harrasses and terrorises the Republican working class. Individuals are arrested and handed over to the RUC. They can be detained for seven days during which they are 'questioned'. During these seven days they are brutally beaten until a statement is extracted. They may then be detained for months without a hearing. When eventually they come to trial, it is likely to be before a non-jury court. The statement forced out by torture is generally sufficient to secure conviction. The prisoner is then incarcerated for a long period of time.

With the aid of this understanding we are now in a position to assess the performance of the RUC. The RUC report for 1976 was published recently and claimed a year of major successes. This supposed success is due to the massive increase in charges brought by the RUC against suspects. In the Annual report there is a clear attempt to imply that all those charged are guilty — which has been uncritically repeated in Britain. Thus suspects are treated as guilty until proven innocent.

Of course one does not expect the capitalist press to tell the truth. But it is distorted even in the British labour movement. A recent issue of the *Morning Star* had the following to say:

'the Unionist paramilitary groups have come under the RUC hammer in an unprecedented way during the summer. The new chief constable of the RUC, Kenneth Newman, with his background in the English police not the RUC, has played a key part in moderating the tacit toleration of the known Unionist gunmen by the RUC special branch.' (Police will see Paisley. *Morning Star* 23 September 1977)

There are two striking points to this report: firstly the implication that the RUC is distancing itself from the interests of Unionism, and secondly, that this is due to British influence. This is completely untrue. As we have seen above the bread and butter work of the RUC is repression of the Republican minority. To distract attention from this is criminal. The appeal to sentimental respect for our English bobby, Mr Newman, is chauvinist through and through. Far from the RUC becoming more moderate during Newman's rule, its repressive role has intensified. We have quoted above Newman's statements which attempt to cover this up.

to our diplomatic Mr Newman:

'It is my considered view that leaders of public opinion have a responsibility to consider very seriously the wisdom of publishing or broadcasting one-sided versions of allegations without awaiting the results of thorough investigation and the completely impartial decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions to whom all such cases must be referred.' (Foreword to RUC Report for 1976 see *Irish Times* 17 August 1977)

It is understandable that Mr Newman wants complaints referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). Both the RUC and the DPP are part of the same British state. Of the 1,110 complaints referred to the DPP in 1976, there was no action in 868 cases and prosecutions directed in only 38, with the remainder pending. Only one of the policemen prosecuted was charged with assault causing actual bodily harm.

This use of torture is not simple brutality. It is a vital part of implementing 'British justice' in the North of Ireland. Emergency legislation allows detention for a period of up to seven days, prior to the charging of a suspect. The significance of this lengthy period of detention is the opportunity it affords for extracting 'confessions'. Paddy Duffy, a leading SDLP member, sums it up:

'As a result of this brutality confessions are being extracted from persons held which could not otherwise be made. The result is that a big percentage of the charges now being preferred and being boasted of by the RUC and Secretary of State are based upon confessions extracted from individuals who have been held in custody, often as long as seven days.' (*Irish Times* 31 August 1977)

Once a statement has been extracted the suspect is passed onto a new stage: a thinly veiled version of internment.

Internment — detention without trial — was most recently reintroduced in the sectarian statelet in August 1971 by Brian Faulkner. With its ending in 1976, it is commonly believed that detention without trial ceased. But nothing in fact could be further from the truth. By refusing bail it is possible to remand suspects in custody for a lengthy period of time. Thus Republican workers are being held for up to nine

It is entirely appropriate that an English policeman has the job of supervising the RUC. The RUC is no neutral police force which can act either peacefully or brutally as directed. It exists to defend the sectarian Northern statelet which is the product of British domination. It is nothing but an arm of the British state in Ireland. The British ruling class cannot reform this undemocratic statelet. Therefore it can only rule by repression. The RUC exists primarily to repress the Republican minority. It is vital that the British labour movement understands this, for the way of halting this escalating process of harrassment, torture and internment is to end British rule in Ireland.

James Martin

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CARTER'S SPEECH: THREAT OR PROMISE?

A century ago Karl Marx remarked that: '...as in private life one differentiates between what a man thinks and says of himself and what he really is and does, so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the phrases and fancies of parties from their real organism and their real interests, their conception of themselves, from their reality.'

This sound advice is too often forgotten by today's socialists. The pronouncements of the ruling class are too frequently accepted as representing their true interests. If ruling class spokesmen then say something which contradicts earlier statements then too frequently the strongest criticism which is levelled at them is one of 'inconsistency'. But while their *statements* may be consistent or inconsistent, what we must establish is whether or not they are consistent with ruling class strategy. To forget this is to run into the greatest confusion.

There can be no clearer example of this confusion than the treatment by British socialists of US ruling class policy on the Irish question, as expressed by Jimmy Carter. The first notice that was taken of Carter's policy on Ireland was when he appeared in public sporting an 'England out of Ireland' badge as part of his pre-election regalia. It is well known how important the Irish-American vote is to the Democratic Party in the US. This fact alone was enough to explain why Carter was wearing the badge. Yet the Fleet Street papers immediately organised a hysterical campaign against Carter. Later, Carter went on to speak of the importance of the US government upholding Human Rights. On St Patrick's day, he said:

'I think the American government ought to stand strongly for basic human rights, whether it's in Northern Ireland or whether it's in other parts of the world.'

Most recently, Carter made a major speech on the US government's Irish policy. This was a most significant speech, as we shall show below. Yet the British left responded as if it was simply a restatement of traditional US policy, apparently not caring to distinguish election tactics from ruling class strategy. The Communist Party of Great Britain headed its report. 'No surprises as Carter has his say', while the International Marxist Group drew attention to 'The bor-

ing banality of Carter's remarks ...'. The *Financial Times* kept them company—it ran its story under the title 'Carter keeps his same Ulster line'.

As far as the left was concerned, there seemed to be no change in US government policy. In the past this has consisted largely of the occasional sympathetic gesture in the direction of a United Ireland, coupled with a refusal to get involved, because it is supposedly a domestic issue for the British government. Thus US policy was largely for internal consumption, amongst the Irish-American community, and received no reflection in foreign policy.

However, the last year has seen a remarkable change in Irish-American politics. In October 1971 Senator Edward Kennedy spoke in favour of a Congress resolution which called for the 'immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and the immediate convening of all parties for the purpose of establishing a United Ireland'. On St Patrick's day Kennedy, with Hugh Carey—the Governor of New York State, Daniel Patrick Moynihan—Democratic Senator, and Thomas O'Neill—Speaker of the House of Representatives, issued a statement calling for an end to support for the Republican movement. This turnaround by leading Irish-American politicians is remarkable. It has been followed by further attempts to undermine Republicanism. In July, Senator Kennedy took the revision of Irish-American politics one step further, by introducing a document produced by the Library of Congress which deals with the history of the Irish Protestants in America. It attempts to highlight their contribution to America, which apparently included civilising talents such as 'felling trees and Indians with equal aggressiveness'!

With such a path swept clear before him, the way was opened for Carter to make his speech. This speech contains significant departures from past US policy, as will become clear when we examine its details.

The first point which is striking is the clear, if implicit, acceptance of Partition—'We have close ties of friendship with *both parts* of Ireland'. Carter could have used a much vaguer or ambiguous phrase such as 'with Ireland' or 'with the people of Ireland'.

He went on to call upon the minority in the

North to stop trying to resist British repression, and to accept the Northern statelet. 'The United States wholeheartedly supports peaceful means for finding a just solution that involves both parts of the community of Northern Ireland... We hope that all those engaged in violence will renounce this course and commit themselves to peaceful pursuit of legitimate goals.' This injunction is not directed at the British Army or the RUC, but at the Catholic minority. Carter then went on to say that US imperialism will make every effort to isolate the minority from international support and leave them defenceless: 'I ask all Americans to refrain from supporting, with financial or other aid, organisations whose involvement, direct or indirect, in this violence delays the day when the people of Northern Ireland can live and work together in harmony free from fear. Federal law enforcement agencies will continue to apprehend and prosecute any who violate US laws in this regard.'

He went on to call for a return to some form of Stormont: 'We support the establishment of a form of government in Northern Ireland which will command widespread acceptance throughout both parts of the community.' Note the careful phrasing—Carter could easily have mentioned power-sharing if he had wished, but avoided doing so. Note too, that he does not talk of *agreement* but of *acceptance*. This leaves open the way in which the consent of the minority will be obtained. This could be voluntarily given or extracted at the point of a gun. Both methods count as 'acceptance' yet only one of them could possibly be described as agreement. Indeed there was much delight in the Northern Ireland Office at Carter's remarks, for they follow current British government practice, which is to drop all reference to power-sharing, and to speak instead of 'an accepted form of devolved government'.

Finally the American investment which the British government is boasting about will only come to the North under certain, very important conditions. 'It is still true that a peaceful settlement could contribute immeasurably to stability in Northern Ireland and so enhance the prospects for increased investment. In the event of such a settlement, the US government would be prepared to join with others to see how additional job-creating investment could be encouraged ...'. 'Peace'—the euphemism for the crushing of the Republican working class—is the pre-condition for US investment to resume.

Far from being composed of 'banalities', Carter's speech contained a very precise policy. It is not a simple restatement of US policy on the Irish question, nor is it a continuation of Carter's earlier, opportunistic pronouncements. It stands very clearly behind British policy, in an unprecedentedly frank fashion.

Every attempt has been made to give the

recent statement the appearance of a cosmetic to satisfy the demands of internal US politics. When the first rumours of the Carter initiative began to circulate, the State Department went to great lengths to emphasise that its 'soundings' and 'discussions', together with the draft presidential statement were produced without Carter's prior knowledge, at the prompting of leading Irish American politicians. In fact the real inspiration and direction to Carter's statement came from a little further East than Boston or New York. For some considerable period there has been pressure from the British ruling class, in public and in private, on the US government to help crush the Irish struggle for self-determination. In December 1975, Wilson and other Labour ministers made sallies on the Irish Northern Aid Committee for its alleged funding of the IRA, and attempted to involve the US government directly in harassing this organisation. It was however election year, and only after Carter's inauguration were any serious moves made by the US government. On February 14th of this year, the Federal authorities began proceedings against the Irish Northern Aid Committee on the grounds of violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act. The courts sought an injunction to open their accounts.

Carter's statement was part of this growing alignment of US Irish policy with that of Britain. Shortly before Carter made his speech, two leading members of the Official Unionist Party, Captain Austin Ardill, and Mr Thomas Passmore—Master of the Belfast Orange Lodge—revealed that they had been consulted in connection with the US initiative on the North. This, in itself is not altogether surprising. But what is remarkable is *who* did the consulting. Ardill and Passmore discussed the Unionist view with *four* officials of the *British* embassy in Washington! When the rumours first started to circulate about the Carter speech, it was asserted that the British government's involvement was limited to a pre-publication view of the speech. It is now clear that this is not true, that the British government was much more deeply involved in the Carter statement than either the British or the US governments care to claim.

The British government needs help from US imperialism for a number of reasons. The first and most obvious is to undermine political and financial support for the Provisionals from Irish Americans. Another reason is to be found in the weakness of British capitalism. We have spelt out elsewhere the importance of British investment in the North in the post-war period. This was quite critical in maintaining the privileges of the Loyalist section of the Northern working class. Most of the foreign investment has been located in the predominantly Protestant east of the Six Counties; in *HO12* we drew attention to the

discrimination practised at the Ford carburettor plant located in the Belfast Catholic ghetto of Andersonstown. Essential to British strategy is the preservation of the privileges of the loyalist workers, relative to the Catholics. Without support from Protestant workers, the northern statelet could not survive. Yet crisis torn British capitalism is unable to guarantee these privileges by maintaining investment in the North. Over the last decade there has been a steady decline in the number of jobs created by firms new to the North:

New jobs from New firms

Year	No. of jobs
1966	4568
1967	2304
1968	2973
1969	2443
1970	1934
1971	1194
1972	370
1973	947
1974	705
1975	334

This reduction in foreign investment to a trickle has been matched by a spate of redundancies created by closures and cut-backs by Rolls-Royce, STC, the Ministry of Defence, BICC, International Electronics, Ben Sherman Shirts, Courtaulds, Grundig and Gallaghers. In 1976 some 75 companies or factories closed. Unemployment has steadily risen:

Male Unemployment Rates

Year	% Unemployed
1974	6.5
1975	8.7
1976	11.7
1977	13.0

What is significant is not merely the magnitude of the unemployment problem; but its distribution between the two sections of the working class in the North. An examination of the figures for the local areas shows that it is the Protestant workers who have been hardest hit in the recent period, although there is a much higher rate of unemployment amongst Catholic workers and they continue to bear the brunt of unemployment.

Male unemployment

Area	June 1975	June 1977	Increase 75-77 as % of '75	%1977
Ballymena	1717	2744	59.8	10.5
Craigavon	1478	2376	60.8	10.2
Newry	2192	2639	20.4	27.0
Strabane	1554	1811	16.5	34.9
N Ireland	27063	41437	53.1	13.0

The unemployment rate amongst Catholics is far higher than amongst Protestants: Ballymena and Craigavon are mainly Protestant areas. But what is also clear is how unemployment has increased much more rapidly in the Protestant areas than in the Catholic ones. For Ballymena and Craigavon the number of people thrown out of work between 1975 and 1977 is proportionately greater than in the Catholic areas of Newry and Strabane.

Without the support of the loyalist workers, the northern statelet, and with it British domination of Ireland, would immediately collapse. British imperialism has secured the 'loyalty' of the Protestant workers by ensuring that they are relatively privileged. The current crisis, with its recent closures threatens these privileges. British capitalism cannot preserve them unaided. Thus its need to call on the support of American imperialism.

On August 1st, Roy Mason unveiled the British side of the deal—a package of subsidies and financial inducements to foreign capital. Some £250m is to be written off the debt of the Northern Ireland Electricity Service, after complaints from the CBI about power costs which are some 30% higher than in Britain. £700m is to be made available over the next six years in the form of various subsidies and grants to foreign capital. The real significance of these inducements became clear the following day, when Mason visited Craigavon:

'He hoped that Craigavon would share the benefits of the financial aid announ-

ced on Monday, and declared that the city was still the major growth point in the North.' *Irish Times* 3 August 1977

Craigavon is through and through a loyalist town. It was set up as a growth centre despite the claims of the predominantly Catholic City of Derry to economic aid. Its unemployment level is nothing like that of Catholic areas, as the table shows. Yet this is where the American investment is to be directed. Clearly this attempt to 'prop up' the Northern economy is nothing but an elaborate attempt to bind the loyalist workers closer to imperialism.

Nor is US imperialist aid limited to the economic sphere. The British government is clearly receiving the most appropriate political aid that US imperialism can offer. The new US Consul-General in Belfast is Charles R Stout. His last job was as a political officer in the US Embassy in Santiago, Chile during the 1973 coup.

Much has been heard from US imperialism in recent months about its support for Human Rights throughout the world—this from the same US imperialism which was responsible for waging war against the people of Vietnam. The opportunity has been seized by some on the left to claim that a 'world-wide debate on Human Rights' has erupted. Even US imperialism would not be so generous—Cyrus Vance, US Secretary of State, has made it clear that the concern for Human Rights takes second place to considerations of international strategy, as in the case of South Korea.

There is a real danger that socialists may take the words of the representatives of US imperialism at face value, and imagine that we're about to witness the dawning of a new era of the 'rights of man' under the beneficent supervision of the United States. It is imagined that help can be sought from US imperialism in providing an opportunity to attack British imperialism in Ireland. The International Marxist Group seems to have been carried away by Carter, talking as it does of

'the present international debate on human rights'

which

'offers a favourable opening to take up Ireland.' (Paper to United TOM conference, p8)

To say this is to imagine that one can play off one imperialism against another, to the advantage of the working class. This could only work if US imperialism could help the interests of the working class. But nothing could be further from the truth. The concern displayed by US imperialism for Human Rights is almost entirely confined to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and is just a cover for an ideological assault by US imperialism on these countries. As we have seen above, US interests in Ireland are wholly aligned with British imperialism. To pretend that the British Left or the Irish people can take advantage of some imagined 'difference' between the British and US ruling classes is to play completely into the hands of imperialism. The only way forward is to build the unity of the British and Irish working class on the basis of the recognition of the Right of the Irish people to self-determination. In Britain this means developing a working class movement demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops.

JackieKaye

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BUILDING AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVEMENT RESONANT DECLARATIONS V REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA

The left in Britain has a very heavy responsibility with respect to Ireland. Any claim to be struggling against imperialism is meaningless without a principled stand against the imperialism of one's own bourgeoisie in its oldest colony. Karl Liebknecht made this point very forcefully about socialists in imperialist countries:

'He who does not fight the enemy, Imperialism, represented by those who stand opposed to him, face to face, but attacks those from whom he is far away ... is no Socialist, but a miserable hack of the ruling class.' (Quoted in W Paul: *The Irish Crisis*, Cork Workers' Club, p11)

The only way British socialists today can effectively fight British imperialism in Ireland is by building a movement in this country which will force the immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland. There is only one social class which can be the basis of such a movement, and that is the working class. It is the only class which has absolutely no interests in maintaining the Union. The task of the British left is therefore to build a working class movement demanding the immediate withdrawal of troops.

The British working class has not taken a principled stand against its own bourgeoisie on the question of Ireland. The solution it sees to the conflict is for the British state to change the nature of its rule there, rather than for that rule to be ended. This attitude to the Irish struggle is in fact a chauvinist one, since it implies that the Irish are not responsible enough to be granted self-determination. The most dangerous form of this chauvinism is its left face, typified by the position of the CPGB, which demands that the British state rule the six-counties more progressively. The conception behind this is that imperialist oppression in Ireland is a policy of the British state, rather than a necessary feature of its rule in that country. While the conviction remains, amongst the most class-conscious of British workers, that the state can choose whether to rule Ireland brutally or humanely, no effective anti-imperialist movement will be built. Such workers will be convinced of the falsity of alternative 'solutions to the Irish problem' only by consistent propaganda, explaining current developments and taking

a clear position on their significance. An integral part of this is making a consistent stand in support of Irish anti-imperialists.

At each crucial point in Irish history, the British left, whatever its assertions, has betrayed the Irish struggle in practice. Its record today is as bad as it has ever been. On the one hand, the dominant sections are opposed to the immediate withdrawal of the troops. On the other hand, those ostensibly committed to immediate withdrawal have been prevented by their opportunism and sectarianism from building a principled working class anti-imperialist movement. This year these supporters of 'Troops Out Now', organised in the Troops Out Movement (TOM), have split, with the formation of the 'United TOM' (UTOM). Let us see whether the UTOM is any more capable than the old TOM of building an anti-imperialist movement.

In the first issue of *Hands Off Ireland* we explained why the RCG left the TOM. We had argued consistently against the failure of the TOM to challenge the chauvinist and reformist conceptions of Ireland in the British labour movement. It had adapted to these conceptions by diluting its own position. Instead of persistent propaganda work, it mobilised for 'spectacular' stunts, substituting slogans such as 'No British Involvement' or 'Britain Must Withdraw' for the unequivocal 'Troops Out Now', which was its original platform. But even these opportunist tactics could not win it any significant new support in three years. We argued last December that:

'... a movement cannot be built on the politics of adaptation. The pursuit of such politics inevitably leads to demoralisation and decline.' (*Hands Off Ireland 1*)

A few months later this predicted decline resulted in a split in the TOM. Many branches left the organisation and set about planning an Open Troops Out Conference. This was held on 2-3 July 1977, and saw the foundation of the UTOM. A small rump of the old TOM was left under the old leadership. Such a major reorganisation would seem to offer a chance to change course and make amends for past failures. Does the UTOM at last represent the nucleus of a serious anti-imperialist movement?

The central debate at the Open Troops Out

Conference was a continuation of that within the old TOM. The RCG argued at the UTOM conference for the need for propaganda in the labour movement, based on a marxist understanding of the current strategy of the British state in Ireland. However, the victorious perspective was in effect no different from the opportunist one of the old leadership. The resolutions passed were those proposed jointly by the International Marxist Group (IMG), Big Flame and the Committee for a Free Ireland. These propose ambitious events, attracting people on the most liberal basis, and drawing in a host of non-working class forces. The 'major national focus for the united TOM during 1977' is to be an International Tribunal on Britain's Crimes against the Irish People. Propaganda in the labour movement was scorned once again as both too passive and too difficult. The IMG regarded its 'main opponents in the new TOM to be the RCG-types who want to philosophise, (sic) rather than act.' (*Irish Notes 1 pl, IMG internal document*)

Before looking at what the IMG's 'action' means in practice we must dispose once and for all of this dishonest characterisation of our perspective as philosophical — as 'all words and no action'.

This is not the first time that opportunists have counterposed 'action' to revolutionary propaganda. In the First World War the left face of chauvinism was represented by the 'social-patriots', who supported their own national bourgeoisies. In 1915, the Parisian paper, *Nashe Slovo*, proposed that those parties opposed to the social-patriots, declaring themselves to be 'internationalists', unite in a grand conference. This proposal was sent to the Bolsheviks. In response, Lenin made it clear that something very different was required to combat social-patriotism effectively:

'Today the task is different, and closer to action: more distrust of resonant declarations and spectacular conferences; more energy in evolving precise replies and advice to writers, propagandists, agitators, and all thinking workers, written in a way that cannot but be understood; more clarity and purposefulness in mustering the forces for a long-term effort to give effect to such advice.' (*Collected Works 21 p191*)

The perspective the RCG puts forward to combat social-patriotism on Ireland, is exactly that regarded by Lenin in 1915 as 'closer to action' than the rallying of forces in an international conference.

It is clear that the IMG's perspectives are no more active than those we are carrying out, but are they any more productive? Let us look at the 'resonant declarations' and 'spectacular conferences' of the IMG, and see what they amount to in practice.

The IMG's discussion document to the conference boldly proclaims:

'No Retreat to a Debating/Propaganda Group; Maintain an Activist Campaigning Organisation.' (*Problems of Building a Mass Troops Out Movement* p2)

Yet where had their 'activists' been when Sinn Fein called for pickets of the Home Office and prisons to protest about the treatment of Irish political prisoners? Why did their 'campaigning organisation' ignore the Easter Rising Commemoration March this year? How can they 'maintain' an activist campaigning organisation which consistently refuses to support marches and pickets called by Irish anti-imperialists?

But let us give them the chance to turn over a new leaf. Perhaps their intentions for the future are good, even if their past record is abysmal. Just before the July conference, the IMG Irish Secretariat declared:

'If the need is greater than ever, so too are the possibilities. Fortunately, the recent divisions in the movement have led not to demoralisation but to an increase of the numbers involved in rebuilding the movement.

The outstanding question now is how to consolidate and increase this enthusiasm and turn it to a positive area of activities.' (*Socialist Challenge* 30 June 1977 p10)

However, this 'positive area of activities' still does not include support for the anti-imperialists. On 7 August Sinn Fein organised the annual Anti-Internment Rally, commemorating the introduction of internment without trial six years ago. Mobilising for this act of solidarity with the Irish struggle would seem an obvious way to 'consolidate and increase' the 'enthusiasm' of those rebuilding the movement. How many IMG banners were there? Not a single one! There were no speakers from the IMG or their paper, *Socialist Challenge*.

The rest of the radical left managed no better. There were only 20 people behind the UTOM banner—less than a tenth of those present at its founding conference, just one month earlier. The Socialist Workers Party scraped together the same number—about a fiftieth of their contingent a week later against the National Front in Lewisham. Only the 'philosophers' of the RCG have been present on the Sinn Fein pickets, the Easter Rising Commem-

oration March and the Anti-Internment Rally.

The IMG's assertions, taunts and promises can now be seen for what they really are—empty words. These people have abandoned any serious struggle against British imperialism. That is what these phrases attempt to cover up. When it comes to the crunch, our British 'internationalists' avoid standing up to be counted on the side of the oppressed Irish nation. Their declarations resonate only because they are so hollow.

Now let us look at the current preoccupation of this group on the question of Ireland. They may not have managed to 'consolidate and increase' the elusive 'enthusiasm', but perhaps they have begun to 'turn it to a positive area of activities'. Their major activity at present is preparing for the International Tribunal on Britain's Crimes against the Irish People. There is one essential criterion by which to judge whether this 'spectacular conference' is a 'positive' activity. That is the part it will play in the building of a working class anti-imperialist movement in Britain.

First let us have a closer look at just one of the organisations approached for support for the Tribunal—Amnesty International. This organisation has repeatedly refused to take up cases of torture and assault of Irish political prisoners, has refused to take up cases of army brutality in the six-counties, and denies the existence of 'prisoners of conscience' in Ireland. The timing of its investigation of torture of prisoners in the South of Ireland is such that it distracts attention from the verdict of the Strasbourg trial of the British government. It therefore comes as no surprise to hear that they have won the Nobel Peace Prize for 1977, following the award to the 'Peace People' for 1976. The imperialists are quite happy with the way such organisations divert indignation away from the real causes of brutality.

The Tribunal is intended to raise opposition to British rule in Ireland by publicising the facts about British atrocities. But, presentation of the facts alone will not be sufficient to break the grip of chauvinism. Workers confronted with evidence of British violence will counterpose the violence of Irish anti-imperialists. The evidence alone will not bring them to an anti-imperialist standpoint. Such information is of course far from irrelevant. Censorship is a weapon of the ruling class in its ideological battle against the working class. This is why, for instance, we see so much in the press about the treatment of Soviet dissidents in mental hospitals, but nothing at all about the treatment with character-changing drugs of Irish political prisoners in Britain. Breaking this censorship is an important factor in building a movement in Britain in support of the Irish struggle. But it is not the determining factor. What is crucial is not assessing which side is more brutal, but

deciding which side represents the interests of the international working class. Turn, for instance to the article in this bulletin on RUC torture. What enables this article to combat the solution of the CPGB—putting a British bobby in charge of the RUC—is not the facts alone, but the political explanation. We explain how torture is part of a mechanism essential to British rule in Ireland, and hence why the only solution is to sever the British connection. The very structure of the Tribunal is designed to avoid such political arguments. It imitates the bourgeois judicial process, which pretends not to prejudice the issue, and hopes that the facts will speak for themselves.

Not only will the Tribunal not convince workers of the necessity for immediate withdrawal of troops, but it is not the working class that the IMG hope to win to the UTOM with this stunt:

'Therefore at present more importance should be paid to developing a campaign on Ireland in the NUS, in the women's movement, the Irish community... The projected International Tribunal offers an excellent unifying focus for such work.' (*Problems...* p8)

So the British elements to which the IMG directs itself are essentially the petit-bourgeoisie, represented by students and feminists. It is noteworthy that these are the elements from which this group itself is largely composed. In its search for liberal democrats outraged at the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland, the IMG will not even find supporters outside its own ranks. We cannot expect a Tribunal pandering to such elements to put over a political standpoint based on the interests of the working class. In fact, any movement built on the petit-bourgeoisie is bound to capitulate to the ruling class. Once again the IMG has shirked the task of taking anti-imperialist arguments into the working class, and has therefore abandoned the struggle against imperialism altogether.

Having seen what the IMG's 'resonant declarations' and 'spectacular conferences' amount to in practice, let us look at how they arrived at this perspective. Why should the International Tribunal be given infinitely more attention than the Anti-Internment Rally? The answer is clearly given in the IMG's discussion document:

'The recent indictment of the British government at the European Court of Human Rights for the use of torture and present international debate on human rights offer a favourable opening to take up Ireland... We feel therefore that the United TOM should take advantage of this opening and give the projected International Tribunal on Britain's Crimes against the Irish People its full support.' (*Problems...* p8)

There is no assessment of the effectiveness of the Tribunal in helping to build an anti-imperialist movement. There is no com-

ment on its class composition, or on the significance of the 'present international debate on human rights' (see the article by A Greene in this issue). The sole justification given for supporting the Tribunal is that a 'favourable opening' exists and should 'therefore' be taken advantage of. Presumably the Anti-Internment Rally, attracting so little interest, presented no such 'favourable opening', so the IMG did not deign to take advantage of it.

You might think it would be difficult to find a clearer example of opportunism. However, one exists in the very next paragraph of the IMG's document, which attempts to justify their failure to raise the question of Ireland in the working class:

'As we have argued already we believe that the openings at present in the labour movement for campaigning on Ireland are limited. We therefore feel that it would be mistaken to make work in the labour movement a central axis.' (*Problems...* p8)

Here we have exactly the same argument, only used in reverse. There is no assessment of the class forces essential to an effective anti-imperialist movement. There is no comment on the nature of the obstacles to raising the Irish question in the British labour movement, and no strategy for surmounting these obstacles. For the IMG it remains a 'tragic paradox' (*Problems...* p1) Their argument is simply this: the 'openings' are limited and 'therefore' so should be the work in the labour movement. A general principle seems to be emerging — the principle of 'openings'. What a splendid scientific strategy for socialist advance! If a door stands open charge straight in. If a door looks locked never try to open it.

What the IMG should surely be asking itself is where these openings lead to. Moving towards this International Tribunal and away from the working class can mean only one thing — moving towards the bourgeoisie. This indicates a total lack of seriousness about the real aims of the UTOM, since, without the working class, an effective movement for the immediate withdrawal of troops simply will not be built. Does the IMG recognise these dangers?

'Indeed precisely in periods like these when the Movement is swimming against the stream, any opening which gives the chance to reach fresh forces should be grasped with both hands.' (*Problems...* p8)

Perhaps the mixed metaphor is not so inappropriate. The tactics of the IMG will leave it clutching at the air.

Since the IMG is so concerned to take the easy way out, we must ask ourselves why they set themselves the task of leading the UTOM. Does this indicate a real concern for the struggles of the Irish and British working classes, albeit accompanied by mistaken tactics? A close look at their attitude to the Open Troops Out Confer-

ence quickly rules out this interpretation. In the planning meetings in preceding months, a very open agenda had been drawn up, which would have given a rare chance for a serious debate on the British states's current strategy, and on the difficulties of building an anti-imperialist movement in Britain. However, the IMG's manoeuvres in these meetings resulted in the last-minute change of the agenda, completely abolishing the possibility for such a vital discussion. Instead the Conference was in the form of a rally, as if the nature of the new TOM was a foregone conclusion. The IMG was prepared to jeopardise the future of the Irish struggle to ensure there was no challenge to its leadership of the UTOM. If any doubts remain about the motives for the IMG's domination of the UTOM, they can be dispelled by reading in an internal document:

'AND LET'S REMBER (*sic*), THE IMG HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD THE IRISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT FORWARD, A TASK WHICH (*sic*) WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND.' (*Irish Notes* 1 p2: capitals in original)

The IMG wants to lead the movement, not because it believes its own approach to be the best way to assist the Irish people in their struggle for self-determination, but because of the beneficial effects this might have on the reputation of the IMG itself, in its attempt to establish a new role for itself on the British left. IMG comrades pleaded with the Open Troops Out Conference to be 'very, very non-sectarian'. This was nothing but hypocrisy. Sectarianism is not the clarifying of political differences. Sectarianism is putting the needs of your own organisation before the needs of the British and Irish movements, and this is precisely what the IMG is doing.

The British left, where it raises the question of Ireland at all, uses it as a football in its sectarian games, rather than creating a serious challenge to British imperialism. This can be as true of those who declare their commitment to immediate withdrawal as it is of those who oppose that demand. What counts is how you *act* in the face of current reality, not what you declare. The British state will withdraw its troops only when the British working class takes up this demand. Reality today determines that this will be achieved only by the most persistent argument against the dominant chauvinist position in the labour movement. *Hands Off Ireland* is aimed at fulfilling exactly this task. Any attempt at building a movement which prefers to seek an easy way out among the liberal petit-bourgeoisie is no more than a pretence. The UTOM, with the IMG as its dominant force, is making just such a pretence. It has no roots in the working class and no interest in the working class. It is merely a formation of radical

petit-bourgeois groups who have already abandoned the battle against imperialism. It is not 'swimming against the stream'. It is swimming along with the flow of bourgeois ideology. It is incapable of facing up to the demanding task determined by present reality.

'So we repeat: more distrust of resonant declarations, and more courage in facing grave political realities.' (Lenin: *op cit*)

Diane Fox

IRELAND British Labour and British Imperialism

This pamphlet argues against the call for a 'Bill of Rights' to bring democracy to Northern Ireland.

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REPORT OF RCG MEETING

On Tuesday September 20th over 80 people packed into the small Conway Hall to hear Steve Palmer, of the Revolutionary Communist Group, and Jackie Kaye, of the Prisoners' Aid Committee, speak against Britain's repression of the Irish people. The meeting had been called by the Revolutionary Communist Group to protest against British domination of Ireland, and to discuss how the fight against British repression of the Irish people can be taken into the Labour Movement in Britain.

Opening the meeting David Yaffe contrasted the large mobilisation by the British left for the demonstration against the National Front in Lewisham with the complete failure of the large left groups to support the anti-internment march of August 7th a week earlier. He argued that only a consistent struggle against British imperialism in Ireland could lay the foundation for defeating racism and halting the growth of fascism in Britain.

The audience heard Steve Palmer describe how the RCG's bulletin, *Hands Off Ireland!*, had predicted intensified repression, and he went on to detail the brutal mechanism which the British ruling class uses in the North of Ireland to try to preserve its rule. The British left has so far failed to build a movement in the British working class in full support of the right of the Irish people to self-determination. It is not only necessary, he argued, but possible to take this question into the labour movement consistently as the large increase of sales of *Hands Off Ireland!* shows.

Jackie Kaye went on to examine the repression in Britain of those who actively supported the right of the Irish people to self-determination. Elaborately staged trials, continued harassment under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, careful orchestration of the Press, brutal and degrading treatment of prisoners had all taken place within existing legal bounds. That the ruling class press should suppress this fact was understandable; but the British left press had completely failed to report these developments. Precedents had been established which would be used against the British working class, thus arose the vital need for the British left to fight to defend the democratic rights of the Irish people.

A discussion followed which included contributions from the Trade Union Commit-

tee Against the Prevention of Terrorism Act and People's Democracy. The comrades from British left groups who spoke included Socialist Charter, Workers Socialist League and the Revolutionary Communist Tendency.

A collection was taken and £46 raised, which was divided between the PAC and *Hands Off Ireland!*

OBITUARY

Irish political prisoner Sean O'Conaill died on 1st October in Moor Green hospital, Southampton, exactly one day after being moved from Parkhurst prison. O'Conaill had been suffering from terminal cancer but during the whole period when his symptoms were unmistakable he received no medical treatment for cancer whatsoever. Instead he was prescribed painkillers and ointment to rub on his chest. In fact the PAC has discovered that there are no facilities for treating cancer within the British prison system. Despite strenuous efforts by the PAC, Frank Maguire MP and O'Conaill's solicitor, even when the Home Office knew he had only weeks to live, they delayed moving him out of prison until the very last moment. One of his dying wishes had been to see Jackie Kaye of the PAC. The Home Office refused to allow her into Parkhurst and when she arrived in Southampton he was already dead. His wife had not been told of the serious nature of his illness and for two years her letters to him had not been forwarded. The day after his death, police visited her home and said they were treating it as a 'sudden' death and asked her extensively about his medical history.

On 8 October Sean was buried in Glasnevin cemetery in Dublin. His last wish had been that he be buried in Ireland. Members of the PAC and Sinn Fein attended the funeral and amongst those present was vice president of Sinn Fein, Joe Cahill and chairman of Leinster Sinn Fein, George Lynch. The callous treatment of Sean O'Conaill by the British authorities is a clear manifestation of that bureaucratic sadism which marks all their dealings with Irish political prisoners.

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